

Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

August 24, 2007 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Yankee Hill Rooms 2 and 3
Lincoln, Nebraska**

A regular meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council was held on August 24, 2007 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Members present: Kathy Anderson, Michelle Bartlett, Kim Chase, Marcia Corr, Eric Dunning, Mary Fran Flood, Louise Hall-Mountain, Kathy Halverson-Rigatuso, Barbara Jackson, Marjorie Kostelnik, Susan Kringle, Terri Lewis, Kim Madsen, Paul Matson, Betty Medinger, Tammy Mittelstaedt, Lynn Mruz, Mary Phillips, Deb Ross, DiAnna Schimek, Barbara Schliesser, Connie Shonka, John Street, Joyce Thomas, Carey Winkler, Carrie Witte, Linda Zinke

Members absent: Sue Adams, Mary A Frank, Christine Carr, Kris Elmshaeuser, LeaAnn Johnson, Sally Lindenberger, Ruth Miller, "Mike" Queen, Todd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Gayle Stinman, Joni Thomas, Derek Weimer

Also in attendance:

ECICC Staff—Terry Rohren, facilitator; Susan Dahm, secretary; Martha Gadberry, facilitator, Gaps and Barriers Committee.

Technical assistants—*Early Childhood Training Center:* Carol Fichter, Carol Puffer; *Head Start State Collaboration Office:* Eleanor Kirkland; *Munroe-Meyer Institute:* Mark Smith; *National Child Care Information Center:* Rae Anderson; *PTI-Nebraska:* Connie Shockley; *U.S. Dept. of HHS-ACF:* Betty Lammle; *Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS):* Lynne Brehm, Amy Bunnell, Shirley Pickens-White, Pat Urzedowski; *Nebraska Department of Education (NDE):* Pat Frost, Melody Hobson, Pam Kasl, Eleanor Kirkland, Joan Luebbers

Guests: Peter, Stacy, and Olivia Scheer; *Nebraska Children and Families Foundation:* Becky Veak, Jan Hernandez and Kelly Medwick; *DHHS:* Jennifer Severe-Oforah; *T.E.A.C.H.:* Brandee Lengel

Working Group Sessions:

The Family Leadership Team, the Gaps and Barriers Committee, the Legislative and Communications Committee, and the Financing Task Force met in separate working groups from 8:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. before the regular ECICC meeting.

AGENDA:

1. Opening and Announcements:

Tammy Mittelstaedt, vice-chairperson, opened the noon working lunch portion of the August 24, 2007 meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council.

a. Approval of minutes

Motion by Kim Chase, seconded by Barb Schliesser: To approve the ECICC minutes of May 18, 2007, as submitted and provided to members in the pre-meeting packet. There was no discussion. The motion to approve the minutes passed by unanimous voice vote; there were no abstentions.

b. Updates

Tammy reviewed ECICC activities completed since the last ECICC meeting in May 2007:

- i. Tammy reported on the visit that she and Ruth Miller, chair, had with Governor Heineman on July 25, 2007. Eric Thompson accompanied the ECICC representatives to provide

information about the completed *The Economic Impact of the Nebraska Early Care and Education Industry*, prepared by the Bureau of Business Research of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The group discussed plans for the rollout and distribution of the report. Ruth and Tammy informed the Governor about other ECICC activities, including the first ECICC listening session and meeting in North Platte, as follow up to the Governor's suggestions in their 2006 meeting. They also discussed the possible Head Start reauthorization requirement for a statewide advisory council for Head Start and the potential for using ECICC to represent that group as well. The Governor noted that he was not amenable to adding additional members to the Council.

- ii. Terry Rohren reported on the results of the evaluation survey conducted after the ECICC meeting in North Platte. Members surveyed responded favorably to the format and meeting content. The majority were also in favor of continuing with an annual listening session held in different areas of the state. There was consensus to arrange a meeting in Hastings, Nebraska, on May 2 or May 16, 2008.
- iii. Tammy reported on discussions by the Family Leadership Team about potential Nebraska Medicaid funding cutbacks and the letter they had sent to administrators in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A copy was also given to the Governor's staff as they requested. Tammy said they would provide a copy of the letter and the response received from DHHS for the ECICC files.

c. Recognition of retiring members

Tammy recognized and thanked retiring ECICC members Mary Afrank, Kris Elmshauser, Susan Kringle, Kim Madsen, and Carrie Witte. Their terms will end on September 30, 2007 or upon appointment of their replacement.

d. New appointments

Meeting participants were informed about the openings on the ECICC and members were asked to forward recommendations for appointment to Terry Rohren, who will work with the Governor's Office on making new appointments.

e. Family Story

Peter and Stacy Scheer and their daughter, Olivia, used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate their family story about their experiences surrounding the birth and first years of Olivia, who has Down's Syndrome. Knowledge of Olivia's condition prior to her birth gave her parents time to plan ahead medically and emotionally for Olivia's special needs. They also discussed their experiences with the Early Development Network (EDN=Early Intervention), which did not occur until after Olivia's medical needs were addressed. They expressed some concern about outdated materials, the need to get into the system faster, and the need for more information about EDN from physicians and "first responders" attending Olivia's early months. Olivia, herself, totally charmed the audience with her delightful participation in her parents' presentation.

Following lunch, the group immediately reconvened in the Yankee Hill 3 Room for continuation of the meeting.

2. Public Comment

- a. Betty Lammle provided an update on reorganization in the Administration of Children and Families regional office.
- b. Susan Kringle expressed thanks for her opportunity to be involved in the ECICC since its inception. She encouraged all to listen to families and to continue to provide opportunities for family involvement in the advisory process.

3. Reports from Working Groups:

a. Family Leadership Team

- Tammy Mittelstaedt reported on the morning meeting of the Family Leadership Team. She introduced Connie Shockley, who will serve as technical assistant from PTI-Nebraska.
- Tammy also informed the group about the Team's plans for a response letter to DHHS regarding Medicaid funding.

b. Gaps and Barriers Committee (GBC)

Carey Winkler, co-chair of the GBC, reviewed the morning discussions in the GBC meeting:

- The Co-Lead agencies are forming a stakeholder group to evaluate and provide suggestions for redesigning the monitoring process for Part C to better correlate with NDE's ILCD process (Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities). The stakeholder group will include several members and technical assistants from ECICC.
- Barb Schliesser informed the GBC that Nebraska had met all of OSEP's (federal Office of Special Education Programs) determinations for the 2007 Part C Annual Performance Report (APR). Nebraska was one of only twelve states to meet the Part C determinations.
- In preparation for the 2008 APR, the Co-Leads will conduct a family survey of half of the families of children with disabilities ages birth-to-3 in Lincoln Public Schools and Omaha Public Schools. The remainder of Nebraska families in Part C will be surveyed in the spring of 2008.
- 2007-2008 grant applications from Planning Region Teams will contain their self assessment information.
- Changes to Part C regulations are in process, but date for completion is not known.
- Plans are underway to develop a statewide program for Positive Behavioral Supports for young children/babies.
- Head Start reauthorization may require a statewide advisory group. Implications for Nebraska and ECICC were discussed.
- Several GBC members volunteered to work with Eleanor Kirkland to draft a charter for a group to work at aligning transportation regulations.

c. Financing Task Force

- Betty Medinger and Kelly Medwick reported on the status of the Economic Impact Study. The final copy has been presented to the Governor and is ready for printing and distribution. A draft press release is moving through the approval process.
- Kelly also talked about other child care initiatives by the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. She introduced Becky Veak and Jen Hernandez, who are developing a tour for legislators of child care sites. They will use the time to educate senators on health, education, and appropriations for Early Childhood.
- The task force group discussed other strategies for informing legislators and the public, such as, video-taping, comments from directors, pod-casting and other ways to continue on-going information about early childhood issues.

d. Legislative and Communications Committee (LCC)

Kathy Anderson reported for committee chairperson, Derek Weimer, who was absent.

- The committee approved the final draft of the Information Sheet on Early Childhood for State Legislators. Kathy provided a sample for viewing by meeting participants. The information is to be printed on card stock and distributed to the homes and offices of state senators. Council members were asked to volunteer to personally deliver the information to the legislators with the expectation that communication would be enhanced by the one-on-one contact. Terry Rohren will send out further information about these plans.

- The LCC is compiling information on federal legislation that impacts early childhood, including the Child Care Development block grant, Title 20, EvenStart, IDEA-Part C grants, Early Reading First, and 21st Century Learning Centers. Specifics will be e-mailed to members as it becomes available.

4. Head Start Reauthorization

Federal Head Start reauthorization is still in process but nearing completion. ECICC members, Deb Ross and Joyce Thomas, both Head Start grantees, explained the impact some of the funding issues that reauthorization may present for their programs. Proposed changes include expanded partnerships, a parent policy council, teacher certification requirements, a national reporting system, and strengthened technical assistance and training. A proposed requirement for a state early learning council might impact ECICC. If it is decided that ECICC should also serve as the required Head Start council, additional members may be needed to cover all areas of required representation in the Head Start council. Meeting participants asked questions and commented on the proposed changes, particularly from the perspectives of families and concern about lost opportunities for kids. Kim Madsen noted that blending collaboration is key to a quality care and education program for families. Meeting participants were encouraged to follow the legislation at www.thomas.gov for summaries and actions on the legislation.

5. Together for Kids and Families

Reports by Eleanor Kirkland, Lynne Brehm, and Jennifer Severe-Oforah provided updates on Together for Kids and Families. Information about the Data Indicators Report was distributed to meeting participants. Eleanor reviewed the progress of Together for Kids and Families since 2004 and the indicators that were developed to measure the impact of its goals and strategies. During that time, the number of indicators was reduced from 84 to 23, which were analyzed for validity and reliability. In 2006 a matrix on data systems across state agencies was constructed and the group looked at research to back each indicator. A profile folder was put together to identify the basis and background for each indicator. The program will be collecting data and developing a fact sheet to show where Nebraska is on care and education of young children. Results will be reported to the ECICC. The next step, after the “landscape” of data is created, is to identify gaps in data and construct plans and timelines for addressing problem areas. The information will be targeted toward professionals in the field, policy makers, and related agencies and organizations. Interests on the data group include Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Munroe-Meyer Institute, NDE, DHSS, Douglas County Health Department, parents and others.

6. Update on Child Care Licensing Changes

Pat Urzedowski reported that within the restructured Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the licensure unit comes under the Division of Public Health and has new responsibilities. She reported on the progress in developing, reviewing, and revising licensing regulations, which was completed in April and is currently awaiting approval in the regulatory and analysis process. Pat explained proposed changes to the regulations, provided a handout on the status of review, and explained the process to finalize the regulations. She responded to questions and comments from meeting participants.

7. T.E.A.C.H.

Information about T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps), which awards scholarships for degree programs for child care providers, was presented by Linda Zinke and Brandee Lengel, coordinator of Nebraska T.E.A.C.H. They explained the history, funding, scholarships, progress, demographics and statistics over the five years that the program has been in Nebraska. During that time a total of 384 child care teachers and providers have been awarded scholarships to work toward attaining an early childhood education degree. The 384 participants

have earned over 7300 college credits in early childhood education. Forty-six students have graduated while on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship.

8. Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)

Carol Fichter updated the Council on the background and statewide planning for an Early Childhood Positive Behavior intervention Support (ECPBiS) program in Nebraska that would support social and emotional foundations in early learning. The program is designed to support social competence and prevent challenging behaviors in young children. Carol provided an overview and highlights of the statewide planning strategies. PBS has historically been used at the elementary and high school levels and now similar programs are being developed for 3-5 year olds. A birth-3 piece is in the early stages with plans to bring in national developers to work with practitioners in Nebraska. A broad-based group, which includes representatives from families to state-level leadership teams, is working on plans for building a statewide infrastructure to support those who want to promote these activities. Carol stressed the collaborative nature of the process and identified the vision for environments to support the positive approach, as well as challenges to the vision. Currently the group is at the point of “planning for action.”

Eleanor Kirkland, Lynne Brehm, and Betty Medinger provided information about the strategic plan for the early childhood piece. Currently, the group is awaiting signatures to approve funding for professional development activities. They are also looking for funding to support leadership toward implementation. Feedback from the current pilot programs provides on-going information. The Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO–Eleanor Kirkland) is serving as coordinator and providing logistical support for the leadership team. Betty noted that a request for applications will be re-released in early September for pilot programs outside of Lincoln and Omaha. The biggest challenge is determining how to sustain training, as well as fiscal and other resources. The leadership group also wants to work with elementary schools doing PBS who are interested in ECPBiS.

Carol summarized the discussion held in the Gaps and Barriers Committee about expanding and collaborating with other programs, such as the program Joan Luebbers and Amy Bunnell reported on regarding Judge Douglas Johnson and his work with young children in Nebraska courts. Carol noted that there may be ways to also connect with CAPTA and other initiatives involving young children. Persons wanting more information on professional development for PBS and ECPBiS should contact Eleanor or Martha Nash at the Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC).

9. Results Matter—Child Outcomes

Barb Jackson updated the Council on efforts to determine quality of assessment for child outcomes. School districts will develop a plan to determine whether assessments are being done correctly—known as the “fidelity” process. A video on the NDE website will provide more information. Local level providers will be able to determine the reliability of their assessments through an Internet reporting program using on-line system licenses through NDE. The effort is to determine the validity of data that is being gathered on child outcomes. Study is starting of data that is currently being reported.

10. Early Childhood Updates

Marcia Corr briefly provided updates on current activities in the Office of Early Childhood:

- There was good attendance for the early childhood presentations at Administrators Days.
- The Board of Trustees for the Early Childhood Education Endowment is beginning to draft RFPs for grants, while waiting for legal counsel determinations. Jessie Rasmussen was elected chair of the Board.
- NDE’s Rule 11 was signed on August 20, 2007, following 18 months of hearings and revisions. The Rule provides realistic guidance for early childhood programs.

- \$1.7 million was awarded for the Early Childhood Grant program this year. More funds were available because of roll-over to state funding for some early childhood programs.
- Administrators will receive an overview of Environmental Rating Scales during trainings to be held across the state.
- The Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC) will become part of the Nebraska Department of Education on September 1, 2007. Marcia and Carol Fichter provided a handout of what will change and what will remain the same.

Next meeting: November 16, 2007 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- ✓ Minutes: ECICC Steering Committee, July 24, 2007
- ✓ Minutes: Gaps and Barriers Committee, May 18, 2007
- ✓ Minutes: Legislative and Communications Committee, May 18, 2007
- ✓ Survey Results: May 18, 2007 Meeting Survey and 2008 ECICC Listening Session
- ✓ Copy: Letter to HHSS administrators (Peterson, Chaumont, Kahlandt, Thomas) re Medicaid Reform Group C Report and Proposal
- ✓ Copy: Letter to Gov. Heineman re visit from ECICC representatives
- ✓ Report: Early Childhood Training Center: Ever Growing and Changing
- ✓ Report: Nebraska Head Start State Collaboration Office, August 2007
- ✓ Report: Child Care Licensing Regulations, status as of August 15, 2007
- ✓ Table: Child Care Indicators/Goals/Rationale
- ✓ PowerPoint presentation: Statewide Planning for Early Childhood Positive Behavior Support in Nebraska—Building from the Teaching Pyramid
- ✓ Article: Facts about Young Children with Challenging Behaviors
- ✓ Article: The Teaching Pyramid—A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children
- ✓ NDE—*Rule 11: Regulations for Early Childhood Education Programs*